

Girlfriend Number One;

Edited by Robin Stevens; Cleis Press

Susan Jasmin

Girlfriend Number One is an amusing compilation of dyke drama, retro sidebar graphics and author notes at the end of each entry that serve to substantiate the claim that it's a queer, queer world and the women who write (and draw) about it are definitely living it. The attitude of the 90's, cynicism, contempt, tattoos and finally a strong sense of community and identity leads more often than not to contempt and cynicism for the community.

As the introduction states, many of these pieces were performed at Red Dora's Bearded Lady Cafe in San Francisco. A friend from New York who read the book found them to be too San Francisco and West Coast in nature, "where poptarts mingle with pesto eggs." Well maybe, but as a recent San Francisco returnee in desperate search for a decent cappacino on Church Street, it's a small attitude problem to overcome.

In *Desperately Seeking Same* and *What is a Lesbian Date*, by Masha Gessen and

Penny D. Perkins respectively, the mating ritual is begun through coincidental meetings, personal ads and yes, more cappacino (the queer fuel of the 90's). Perkins writes, "A lesbian date is something where there is a mandatory mention of Jody, Martina, Madonna, of k.d." Not unlike the latest issue of *Denuve*. Other encounters occur at work in the lingere department of an exclusive downtown store and also at a stripjoint. In most accounts, what was imagined becomes true on the page. Robin Steven's protagonist in *Vengeance* meets her ex-lover's new girlfriend at a dinner party and with the mental encouragement of Camille Paglia ringing in her ears, handcuffs the girlfriend to a remote radiator rationalizing, "She still has friends! I paused worried for a minute. And I think she has a lover." Justification enough.

Mabel Maney has a short piece combining text with excerpts of graphics that look like dictionary illustrations and *Break-Up in Five Slams* by Hilty, Gallant, and Daniels is a brief, poetic kiss-off with a Beat, black turtleneck

theme. "Your friends come and go/Speaking of Barry Manilow." Poetry Slams are gaining in popularity across the country so it's a very appropriate medium in which to do battle.

The author interviews at the end of each contribution are some of the funnier parts of the book, E.G. Chrichton's recent accomplishment "Got eighteen mostly straight art students to rate each other on a butch-femme scale." And Robin Stevens' response to the query, best pick up line "So, does this marriage you're in prevent you from kissing anyone?"

If this generally funny combination of lesbian incographics, comix and short fiction with a bit of West Coast appeals to you, be sure to read Mabel Maney's *The case of the Not-So-Nice Nurse (A Nancy Clue Mystery)*, a novel of "gay adventure" and one strange coming out for our heroine, Cherry Aimless. ▼

Several contributors to Girlfriend Number One will be at Chassman and Bem in Burlington on June 22 at 7pm as part of Gay Pride month.

Health Resource Organizations

AIDS HOTLINES:

Vermont	1-800-882-2437
New Hampshire	1-800-752-2437
New York State	1-800-541-2437
Massachusetts	1-617-522-4090
Maine	1-800-851-2437
National	1-800-342-2437
Canadian	1-613-563-2437

AIDS Community Awareness Project (ACAP)

PO Box 608
St. Johnsbury VT 05819
(802) 748-1149

AIDS Community Resource Network (ACoRN)

PO Box 2057
Lebanon NH 03766
(603) 448-2220

Bennington Area AIDS Project

PO Box 1066
Bennington VT 05201
(802) 442-4481 or 1-800-845-2437

Brattleboro AIDS Project

PO Box 1486
Brattleboro VT 05302
(802) 254-4444 (Helpline)
(802) 254-8263 (Office)

Franklin-Grand Isle AIDS Task Force

P. O. Box 241, St. Albans VT 05478
(800) 524-7742 • (802) 638-7834

Friends Vermont

Emotional, Spiritual, & Psychological Support
PO Box 402
Bristol, VT 05443
1 800 639-3316

Gay/Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous

GLAA, P.O. Box 5653
Burlington, VT 05402

Lesbian Cancer Support Group

(802) 660-8386

North Star (Holistic Health Care)

RR2 Box 3255
Morrisville VT 05661 • (802) 888-2858

Vermont AIDS Council

PO Box 275
Montpelier VT 05601 • (802) 229-2557

Vermont C.A.R.E.S.

(Committee for AIDS Resources,
Education, and Services)

PO Box 5248
30 Elmwood Avenue
Burlington VT 05401
(802) 863-2437 (Burlington)
1-800-649-2437 (Outside Burlington Area)

Vermont Department of Health

1-800-882-2437 (AIDS Hotline) or
(802) 863-7245 (AIDS Program office)

VT PWA Coalition

PO Box 1055 • Brattleboro, VT 05302
1-800-698-8792 or (802) 222-5123

Vermont Women's Health Center

336 North Avenue
Burlington VT 05401 • (802) 863-1386